

Statewide Findings

■ Parents and business people asserted their involvement is essential, and that each contributes something unique.

Parents suggested they bring to partnership effort's intimate knowledge and a "sense of reality" about the needs of families, as well as ideas about how to improve services. Business people noted they provide resources, skills, and expertise that can help the partnerships function more effectively and efficiently. Executive directors concurred with parents and business people and emphasized that the contributions of both are critical if partnerships are serious about achieving true community collaboration.

■ Many local boards included more parent and business representatives than mandated by the legislation.

Half of the partnerships had more than two parent positions, ranging from three to eight. Thirteen partnerships had more than two business positions, ranging from three to ten. Many executive directors, parents, and business people contended that two parent positions and two business positions, as mandated, are not enough.

■ Efforts to involve parents and business included a range of strategies, with a handful predominating.

Across the partnerships, executive directors reported an array of strategies to support parent and business involvement. However, the majority tended to focus on implementing only a few strategies rather than a comprehensive community involvement effort. The strategies used most often included: evening meetings and child care arrangements to involve parents; appointments of business people to leadership roles and solicitation of funds to involve business.

"Someone who has been there, is there, or who has passed through there, they can answer a lot better than someone who has never been there."

Parent

"Putting business people in there with sound business judgement, side by side with human service people. You get a very good balance. The idealism of human services people is tempered by the good business heads of the business people and vice-versa."

Business Person

"The requirement [of 2 business representatives] doesn't match the expectation. It does the same thing for parents. We are always outnumbered. The others are there because they have to be there. We're there because we want to be there. We are committed. It doesn't make sense."

Business Person

"We have to find creative ways to get their input without overburdening them."

Executive Director